(a) whether it is a fact that till September, there will be no crop arrival and the monsoon is also expected below par; and

(b) if so, what steps Government is taking to reduce the food price inflation which is a major concern for common man?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Kharif crops are sown from June up to end of July/first week of August and are harvested from September to December/January.

As per the Indian Meteorological Department report on monsoon during the period 1st June to 29th July 2009, the Cumulative rainfall received for the country as whole, was 353.22mm which is 19% below the L.P.A. The monsoon has revived in many parts of the country and has resulted in advancement of agricultural activity in many states.

(b) The Government has taken a number of fiscal and administrative measures to control the price rise and to soften the impact of price rise on consumers such as augmenting domestic supplies of foodgrains through imports at zero / reduced rates of duty, ban on exports and imposition of stock limit orders. As a result of the various steps taken by Government, prices of certain essential commodities such as wheat, edible oils have generally declined or are steady.

Delegated powers to States to keep a check on sugar stocks

3712. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether growing concern over speculative activity in sugar future is the main concern of Government;

(b) whether Government is considering a proposal to delegate more regulatory powers to States to keep a strict tab on sugar stocks and their movement in addition to the existing powers of State to impose stock and turnover limit granted to them in February, 2009; and

(c) if so, to what extent States have been able to keep tab on sugar stocks and what is the latest position and to what extent the State Governments propose to take steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The domestic future trading in sugar has been suspended with effect from 27.05.2009 till 31.12.2009. At present, there is no proposal under consideration of the Central Government to delegate more regulatory powers to States to keep a strict tab on sugar stocks and their movement in addition to the existing power to States to impose stock and turnover limit granted to them.

(c) Does not arise.